

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEHRAN 00536 161159Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01
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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6420
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: IR PINR
SUBJ: APPEALS COURT UPHOLDS DEATH PENALTY FOR CIVILIAN SPY

REF: 77 TEHRAN 11263

1. A MILITARY COURT OF APPEALS ON JAN 15 UPHELD THE DEATH SENTENCE OF ALI NAQI RABBANI QUJDEH, 56, A FORMER EMPLOYEE IN THE GOI MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. THE 5 MILITARY JUDGES UNANIMOUSLY CONFIRMED THE DEC 19 MILITARY TRIBUNAL RULING THE QUJDEH WAS A SPY FOR THE SOVIET UNION FOR MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS AND RECEIVED CASH, GIFTS AND OTHER FAVORS FOR HIS SERVICES ON A REGULAR BASIS.

2. DURING APPEALS TRIAL QUJDEH REPORTEDLY CONFESSED TO HAVING MAINTAINED CONTACT WITH SOVIET INTELLIGENCE AGENTS, AND TO HAVING PASSED INFORMATION TO THEM, HE HAS APPEALED TO THE SHAH FOR IMPERIAL CLEMENCY.

3. COMMENT: THIS IS THE SECOND SPY TRIAL WITHIN THE PAST MONTH AND WAS WIDELY REPORTED TODAY IN LOCAL MEDIA. IN CONTRAST WITH PREVIOUS PUBLISHED REPORTS ON QUJDEH CASE WHICH REFERRED VAGUELY TO "FOREGIN AGENTS" AND - "FOREGIN UNCLASSIFIED

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POWER", LATEST STORIES EXPLICITLY REFER TO "MOSCOW PAID SPY" AND "SOVIET INTELLIGENCE AGENTS"--A DELIBERATE CHANGE OF POLICY BY THE GOVT. FARSI PRESS HEAD-LINED QUJDEH AS "SOVIET SPY" AND WITHIN TEXT OF STORIES IDENTIFIED FOR FIRST TIME PREVIOUS SPY, GEN MOGHARABI, AS SOVIET AGENT. THERE IS NOT EXPECTATION THAT THE SHAH WILL GRANT CLEMENCY IN THIS CASE. ACCORDING TO IRANIAN

LAW SENTENCE, UNLESS COMMUTED, MUST BE CARRIED OUT
WITHIN 10 DAYS OF DECISION.
SULLIVAN

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